

By email



Ref: 09/10/29/lk/337

Mr Gavin Dee
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Health Protection Agency

Communications

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Dear Mr Dee

Re: H1N1 diagnosis and positive H1N1 laboratory test rates in England

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request dated 29 October 2009 regarding H1N1 diagnosis and positive H1N1 laboratory test rates in England. Under section 1 (1) (a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I can confirm that we do hold some of the information you require.

I have responded to your questions in the order you raised them below.

1. Total number of H1N1 influenza cases in England reported by the UK government in 2009 to date

I can confirm that the total number of laboratory confirmed cases of H1N1 swine is 15886 (as of 13 November 2009). This is different to the estimated number of cases produced by the statistics unit each week.

2. Number of laboratory tests carried out for suspected H1N1 Influenza in England in 2009 to date

A total of 70,390 tests were carried out up to Tuesday 10 November 2009 in Regional Microbiology Network Laboratories (RMN) for the H1N1swine virus. An additional 4284 tests were carried out at the Health Protection Agency's Centre for Infections. The HPA does not know how many additional tests may have been carried out in non RMN labs using commercial kits that are not the Colindale polymerase chain reaction (method for detecting small fragments of genetic material). This total figure includes repeat tests on the same patient whereas the confirmed cases figure above is individuals not tests.

2a. Number of these tests that have proved positive for H1N1 influenza

As of 13 November 2009 the Situation Report number was - 15,886.

2b. Number of these tests that have proved positive for a strain of influenza other than H1N1

From 01/01/2009 to 23/11/2009, the Respiratory Virus Unit (RVU) Reference laboratory at Colindale detected the following:-

Influenza strain	Total
B	180
H1 Seasonal	63
H3	617

2c. Number of these tests that have proved negative for any type of influenza.

The HPA can only provide the number of tests that were not swine flu positive in RMN labs but not for any type of influenza as requested. The total number of tests that were negative for swine flu is 53,776. 'Labbase' doesn't hold negative data either.

3. The total number of completed questionnaires submitted to the National Flu Pandemic Service in England by telephone and via the www.pandemicflu.direct.gov.uk website since its establishment

The National Pandemic Flu Service is run by the Department of Health and they have the total number of callers since it began at the end of July.

I can confirm under section 1 (1) (a) of the Freedom of Information Act that the HPA does not hold this information. In accordance with section 16 - *duty to provide advice and assistance* I would suggest that you contact the Department of Health directly to gain this information. <http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/FreedomOfInformation/index.htm>

As for the number of callers/web users with influenza, the Department of Health are not testing these individuals so the total number are not known. At the HPA, we are running a self-sampling scheme, where we are asking a small selection of callers to swab themselves and we test their samples for swine flu and other influenza viruses. Up until 12 November 2009, the scheme only approached individuals over 16 for self-sampling. Sampling has now been extended to include school-age children (5-15 years) but no results are available for that age group.

So far, we have tested 7,142 National Pandemic Flu Service (NPFS) callers/web users since 3 August 2009; 828 individuals have returned samples that have been unsuitable for testing. Please note that all individuals tested were authorised

antivirals and the majority had begun taking their anti-virals before sampling. We are unsure as to how this may have affected the results.

3a. The total number of these questionnaires that led to a diagnosis of H1N1 influenza infection

Of the 7,142 samples tested, 1,205 NPFS users have returned samples positive for H1N1v (17%)

3b. The total number of these questionnaires that led to a diagnosis of influenza infection of a strain other than H1N1

Of the 7,142 samples tested, 4 callers/web users have returned samples positive for Seasonal influenza A/H3 (0.06%)

3c. The total number of these questionnaires that did not lead to a diagnosis of any type of influenza.

Of the 7,142 samples tested, 5,933 callers/web users have returned samples negative for influenza (83%). A further 828 samples returned were unsuitable for testing due to contamination.

I hope you have found this information useful, however, if you are dissatisfied with this response and would like a copy of the HPA complaints procedure then please contact Mr George Stafford, Complaints Manager at: Health Protection Agency, 61 Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5EQ.

Please note that you have the right to an independent review by the Information Commissioner's Office if a complaint cannot be resolved through the HPA complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner's Office can be contacted by writing to Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Please contact me if you require any further information or assistance.

Yours sincerely

Leigh Kelly
Freedom of Information Officer
Health Protection Agency